

Blair Glitters In Debut Game

THREE superb goals by centre-forward Peter James, marred only by an ankle injury late in the game, and some inside-right sorcery by new-man George Blair, brightened Wycombe Wanderers' Isthmian League prospects on Saturday. Wycombe thrashed their hosts Ilford 5-2.

But unlucky Ilford, weakened by injuries, missed two penalties and had two goals banned for 'offside'.

The shooting form and positional play of James, in this, his best ever display for a Wycombe senior team, was a revelation. James, Blair and Len Worley frequently split the Ilford defence wide open during an exciting game played in tropical conditions at Newbury Park.

Blair, the former Wolverton forward, added considerable punch to the Wycombe attack.

Weakened Ilford had four changes, including three in the forward line, and put up a spirited show against the more experienced Wanderers.

Wycombe opened strongly but after 25 minutes Ilford took the lead when Heywood diverted a header from Christmas past goalkeeper Brown. Ilford missed several chances through bad finishing.

As Ilford's pace slackened, James finished off a polished movement with a terrific cross shot into the roof of the net. This was the goal of the match.

Although Ilford shared the attacking play there was a marked difference in the approach work and finish with Wycombe showing something of their old form.

Even so, Ilford's determination always threatened the Wycombe goal. After 31 minutes a penalty was given against John Fisher and Wycombe has a series of amazing escapes. Whittall drove the spot kick straight at Brown and then, from the loose ball, hit a post. Christmas raced in to blaze wide of an open goal.

PERFECT PASS

Four minutes before the interval James laid on a perfect pass for Blair to crash home Wycombe's second goal.

Soon after half-time Worley shot tamely wide with an easy chance and in the same minute Christmas was given offside after scoring what seemed a good goal.

Almost immediately James raced past the Ilford centre-half to run on to a through pass from Thomas. He neatly tricked the right back Neale and scored from 18 yards. He soon added a third.

After reducing their arrears through a Christmas header Ilford attacked hard. But Wycombe seemed to be taking things easy . . . so much so that Ilford full back Eric Cross was allowed to run the ball into the penalty area. Worley was rather harshly judged to have fouled Cross and a penalty was given.

McKendry took the kick but shot straight at Brown who saved his second penalty of the day.

The heat told on both teams now but Wycombe were clearly less distressed. With nine minutes left Holmes positioned himself perfectly to head home a cross from Rockell for Wycombe's fifth goal.

Wycombe: K. Brown; J. Beck, A. Lewis; D. Thomas, J. Fisher, C. Gale; L. Worley, G. Blair, P. James, T. Holmes, M. Rockell.